





Class D33515

Book -433H6

Copyright N^o 1277

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

HOMESPUN

HOMESPUN

BY
GRACE E. HALL

“”

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1922

PS3515
A33 H16
1922

COPYRIGHT, 1922,
By DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY, Inc.

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

©CL A 683962

VAIL-BALLOU COMPANY
BINGHAMTON AND NEW YORK

NOV - 1 1922

211

TO
MILDRED

CONTENTS

	PAGE
TENACITY	1
WHEN HE HAS TRIED	2
THE TWAIN	4
THE MECHANIC	6
THE QUESTION	7
WHEN I SHALL DIE	9
A MAN TO HIS PIPE	11
DEFIANCE	14
BUILDERS	16
A PRAYER	17
A WASTED DAY	19
THE GAME	20
TAKE TIME	21
GOALS	22
UNFORGOTTEN	23
BOYS	25
TO A GROUCH	26
GOOD-BYE	27
LOST: A FRIEND	28
CLOUDS	30
YOU	32
JUSTICE	33
POPULARITY	35
GOODNIGHT	37
WOODS IN AUTUMN	38

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE DIFFERENCE	39
FORGET IT	40
IN THE NATURE OF THINGS	42
DREAMS	43
THE PRICE	45
MOTHERS OF MEN	46
THE TOUCH OF LOVE	47
QUARRELS	49
I'VE WANTED YOU	51
LONELINESS	52
THE LITTLE OAK CHAIR	53
BROKEN DREAMS	55
THE LONELY	57
MISUNDERSTANDING	58
SCHOOL DAYS	59
YOUR EYES	61
SILENCE	63
AN INCONSISTENCY	64
I'VE PRAYED FOR YOU	66
FAREWELL	68
THE MOUNTAINS	69
CONFIDENCE	71
DEATH	73
WE WERE NOT SATISFIED	74
A STRANGER THEN AM I	76
I NEVER KNEW	79
SILENT PLACES	80
RENUNCIATION	82
HE PAINTS IN GRAY	83
DESIGN	84
THE DROUTH	86

CONTENTS

	PAGE
NIGHT	88
THE PHANTOM	89
IN NATURE'S THEATRE	90
HE BROOKS NO LOSS	92
AN ODE TO NATURE	94
THE TALISMAN	96
SUNSET	98
THE UNSOUGHT	100
ART	101
THE MAN-LAND	103
DREAD	105
IF I MIGHT ASK	106
PERFECT DAYS ALWAYS	107
A FRIEND OF MINE	109
MY UNKNOWN FRIENDS	111
LITTLE GIRL	113
A LITTLE WAY WITH ME	115
TO THE SONG BIRDS	116
TWO TRUTHS I OWN	117
UNSELFISHNESS	119
IN PARTING	121
JUST HUMAN FIRST	122
DOWN ON THE FARM	124
MOTHER	126
WHY SHOULD MAN DIE?	128

HOMESPUN

TENACITY

So long as mind holds fast you shall not fail,
Though great the task and seemingly hard-pressed
You stagger 'neath the weight; but once you quail
In thought, and all your strength can never wrest
A victory from the struggle, for your force
Comes through your mental grip—no other source.

This simple fact explains why some men win
While others lag and lose at last the game:
One draws the final ounce of power within,
Through dogged perseverance, and his fame
Is not so much a gift above the rest,
As 'tis the drive of faculties possessed.

Hold! Though the storms of life may madly surge,
Though thunders crash and all about you fall
The victims of the gale; still firmly urge
To use your mental force, and over all
You shall prevail; that is your secret power,
And destinies are shaped by it each hour.

WHEN HE HAS TRIED

Blame not the man who has done his best
In the thing he has tried to do,
Who has given his strength and measured his length,
However it looks to you,
For his best is all that a man can give—
A fair mind holds this true.

Oh, hail not alone the one who wins,
Ignoring the ones who lose,
For they may gain a lap o'er a handicap
That no one would ever choose;
Then if with the rest they have done their best,
How dare we praise refuse?

Though he crosses the line a bit too late,
Give the racer plaudits loud,
Withhold your sneer—he has earned a cheer
By facing the scoffing crowd;
For it takes more courage to bear defeat
Than to carry laurels proud.

If he does his best, then the one who wins
Has given no more than he,
The best is the limit of each man's worth,
Whatever that limit be;
And the man who goes to his utmost goal
Wins too—though the world won't see.

THE TWAIN

He saw the masonry tier on tier
That fashioned the bridge they crossed,
She saw the mind with its vision clear,
That never a detail lost;
He figured the cash it had cost to build—
The power of each massive span,
She glimpsed the spirit that first had thrilled
And given birth to the plan.

He viewed the cathedral and said 'twas fine,
The labor, he guessed, was great;
She was blinded by grandeur of art divine,
And worshipped beside the gate;
He listened to music by artists rare—
And wondered what they were paid—
She heard God's voice in the sacred air—
Was humbled and half afraid.

The twain returned from the spaces afar
Where marvelous sights accrue,
He told of the gains and she of the brains,

And both of the tales were true;
He measured the greatness by cost in gold,
And that was his only zest;
Her measures were those that are never told—
Rich gems in her memory-chest.

'Tis said that “ the twain shall be one flesh,”
That no one shall break the tie,
That a man and his mate are thus through fate
And the Power that rules on high;
They call it a sin when love has ceased,
And maybe that idea's best,
But the West cannot go to the East, you know,
And East cannot come to the West.

THE MECHANIC

Oh, patient toiler, your unclaimed praise
I would my halting pen might here express!
We owe to you the ease of all our ways,
In countless spheres your excellence confess;
Your roughened hands, your garments crude and coarse,
Your whole appearance speaking naught of ease—
I trace in speculation to their source,
And find a history in all of these.

You slave and build and fashion for us all,
Bring others' plans to form—as they could not;
In pleasant or in loathsome place, each call
You answer with your skill and strength and thought;
Yours is no path that roses bloom beside,
And scarred forevermore your hands must be,
Yet but for you had progress long since died,
And dreamers visioned castles—uselessly.

THE QUESTION

A woman walked alone one night
Within the silent park,
The moon thrust gleaming blades of light
Across the pathway dark;
Each wild thing in its sheltered home
Was motionless and still,
A pine tree in the skyline zone
Was the guardsman of the hill.

The woman walked with measured tread,
Unmindful of the way,
A weight of sorrow bowed her head,
And every path seemed gray;
The stars were like a million beads
Upon a velvet gown,
But when the heart in silence bleeds,
The eyes of man look down.

She viewed in retrospect the years
That, like the falling leaves,

Had flitted by, damp with her tears,
A harvest stripped of sheaves;
“What have I gained from life?” she cried,
With scornful glance towards heaven,
When lo! she seemed to see inscribed
The words, “What have you given?”

WHEN I SHALL DIE

Oh, make me not an ugly thing in death!
Let me be beautiful in that last sleep;
Place 'round my head red roses, that their breath
May give perfume; and let my firm lips keep
Their color, though a stranger's hand apply
The carmine—and I'll bless him for the lie!

Oh, make me not an ugly thing that day,
For I have worshipped beauty, and have wept
In silence, many a time, along life's way
When beauty's spell has swiftly o'er me swept:
A baby's dimpled hand—a curl of hair—
A woman's face—a sunset in the West—

The lithe form of a man—a painting rare—
Each woke a keen response within my breast;
Flowers—and stars—and dawn—and river's flow—
Music—and e'en old age that was benign—
All—all—have yielded joy and warmth and glow,
And made impressions on this soul of mine.

God, let me not remain to fade and die,
A withered, ugly thing among the flowers,
But catch my breath away, in passing by,
And halt me e'er I lose my splendid powers;
And you who wait, bring roses for my hair,
And let sweet music banish every tear,
For I have worshipped beauty everywhere,
And I would have it present at my bier.

A MAN TO HIS PIPE

'Tis shadow-hour again, old pal of mine,
And somehow it is grayer than before;
The mantel clock has beaten out the time,
And moonbeams lie aslant the open door;
Your odor drifts like incense on the air,
My nostrils take your breath with keen delight,
'Til in your aura glints a woman's hair,
Soft spreading on the breeze that stirs the night.

A woman's hair! Pal, can I not forget?
Why do you tease and tantalize me now?
You share my every confidence, and yet
You slyly weave a nimbus for her brow;
Well, make a golden halo if you will,
While we go back along the trail of years,
And linger o'er the story and its thrill—
Yea, and the sad finale and the tears.

I never asked if there were vital powers
Behind that face so beautiful and fair,

To meet life in its darker, sterner hours—
In truth I did not even pause to care;
With passion's fever burning in the brain,
With youth and love and Springtime all about,
Why ask what attributes are truly gain?
Why fret the heart with questioning and doubt?

And so I brought her here. You must recall
How seldom then I sought your silent balm;
How, when the twilight mist began to fall,
I found in her my soul's long-needed calm;
And then one night—ah, you remember too!—
A tiny babe lay cold upon her breast,
Her white lids hid those merry eyes of blue,
Her tender little hands lay still, at rest.

I never had a pal like her before,
Who seemed to always rouse the best in me;
I never tired of striving, o'er and o'er,
To climb to heights she somehow seemed to see;
And if they both had lived—But why go on?
You know the rest; it's only life's queer way—
A little patch of sunshine, just at dawn,
That often turns by noontime into gray.

Old pal, my lips caress you as of old,
For you have never failed to soothe and cheer;

You know ten thousand things I've never told,
Have comforted when no one else was near;
And with your vapor drifting on the air,
You bring me tender memory of her grace,
You weave a magic glory of her hair,
And paint tonight cloud-pictures of her face.

DEFIANCE

Let no man say to you that you shall fail—
Fling back his words and prove they are but lies!
Although your spirit falter—aye, and quail—
You shall not lose unless your courage dies;
So long as you are brave enough to try,
The flame of strength within you shall not die.

If sometimes you shall feel the fatal urge
To let your grip grow loose upon life's reins,
Lash every energy with scorn, and merge
Your forces in a drive against your pains;
Let no one have the chance to pass and say
You are a weakling, wrecked along the way.

Let no man smile and say you've lost your hold—
You're judged by what you seem in actual view;
Within his heart he too may be less bold
A thousand times than he may seem to you;

The one who takes the upper sphere, is he
Who fights each day a stronger man to be.

Whatever be the place that now is his,
Be sure he fought to be the man he is.

BUILDERS

One builds foundations with a careful hand,
Each stone square set with accuracy and skill;
Another builds great temples, wisely planned—
One rears a school house on a barren hill.

A mansion is the fancy brought to earth
Through someone's clever handiwork and brain;
So do men blend their dreams in forms of worth,
That, fashioned, blend in dreams of men again.

Then, since all work of man is viewed by man,
To stir and wake and urge endeavors new,
How careful should he be in every plan—
Painstaking in the task that he shall do!

A PRAYER

Lord, I have drunk from strange and varied founts,
And still a thirst is dry upon my tongue;
I am not satisfied; the fever mounts
Within my veins; my nerves are harshly strung;
No substance have I garnered that has filled
The emptiness of soul that still is mine,
Though mortal joy for fleeting hour has thrilled,
It palled at last, like vapid, tasteless wine.

Lay Thou upon my lips some potion sweet,
For I have tasted aloes—aye, and gall!
'Tis but in fairness I should have complete
In final years, exemption from it all;
Assuage this thirst! Some fountain there must be
Where others have been blessed, to long no more:
Give one full draught of happiness to me,
That Life, long loitering, has failed to pour.

There is a sedative within Thy grace—
I've seen its power transform a human heart;

It leaves a nameless calm upon the face,
Gives strength to live and play a nobler part;
The founts of life are bubbling full and free,
But sediment encrusts each brimming cup—
Hold Thou against my lips eternally
Thy living truth—and let me humbly sup.

A WASTED DAY

I kept a dream for you, a splendid dream,
And in it life and hope were very sweet;
We drifted in the sunshine down a stream
Where fringing pine-tops lean across and greet;
And o'er the heart peace lingered like a mist,
And tender as the lips you one-time kissed;
You left the dream untold; its meaning lies,
A darkening shadow ever, in my eyes.

I kept a day for you, a gladsome day,
With all it held of mirth and joy and thought;
Its spirit with the throb of life was gay,
It held rare promises that Love had brought
From out the treasure-house of sacred things—
And words to thread like pearls on silver strings—
Words that were just for you—and songs unsung;
You left the heart-strings silent, the pearls unstrung.

THE GAME

Fate deals the cards—the spades, the clubs and hearts,
The diamonds—counting out the legal hand;
None may exchange, though, seeing, there departs
All hope of what we hoped to play—and planned.
Some hold but scattered suit, while others smile
O'er richer draw, which means that they shall win;
But Fate, unheeding, shuffles all the while,
Since every moment new games must begin.

The players take the cards that have been dealt,
Count carefully the points they may secure,
Bid up, ofttimes, though serious doubt be felt—
For in this game of chance no bet is sure;
Unnumbered souls are sickening day by day,
Because of tricks caught up by those expert,
Because another, through a mere chance play,
Won what they crave with never-ceasing hurt.

TAKE TIME

Take time to do a kindly deed—
You may not know the crying need
Within another's heart,
Sometimes, for just a pleasant tone,
When he's discouraged and alone—
And smiles will soothe a smart.

Take time to say a word or two
To those who walk perchance by you
In lowly, humble ways;
They are the fruits of circumstance,
And handicapped beyond advance
Throughout their plodding days.

Take time to touch the empty hand
Of loneliness; few understand
The untold griefs they bear;
There is no sorrow like to this:
The craving just for happiness,
The wasted thoughts none share.

GOALS

It isn't so much what a man has done,
As what he has tried to do;
It isn't the victories that he has won,
But the storms he has weathered through
With courage and faith and a cheery smile,
That make him a person so well worth while.

The man who has fallen has had his dream,
And maybe he saw a star
So high and so bright that his mortal scheme
Fell short of the gleam afar;
But if he has climbed 'til his strength is spent,
Then give him full credit for his intent.

It isn't the goal that a man may win
That counts the most in the score:
But the blows that have proven the worth of him,
In a million tests and more;
For it isn't always the man who leads
Who possesses the strength that the old world needs.

UNFORGOTTEN

Do you think of me sometimes, you who went
On an alien path ere our love grew cold?
Out in the spaces where you have won
To the heights that you dreamed of, have you done
Such deeds as have made you more content
Than you were in our love of old?

Do you think of me sometimes, where you are,
And wish you had held to the other way?
Those high-flung trails—are they all you crave?
Do they yield the sweetness our young love gave?
You fastened your wagon to a star—
Does it brighten your every day?

Oh! I warm my heart by that youth-time fire
When the breath of the years grows chill;
And always I wonder if you recall
That white-hot flame, when the shadows fall—
Do the heights suffice for your soul's desire?
Do they warm like our first love's thrill?

Do you think of me sometimes, dear, out there,
Where the trails lead high and you longed to go?
I could not forget if I tried! I keep
My faith with you ever, awake, asleep;
And sometimes I call, and it is a prayer—
Do you hear my voice on the warm night air
Ever, when soft winds blow?

BOYS

O, how they scatter and toss things about—
Their books and their clothes and their toys!
From basement to garret you put them to rout,
Denouncing disorder and noise;
You “don’t” them in one breath and “do” them the
 next,
They never elude you for long,
And you frequently say you will welcome the day
When they grow to be men—but you’re wrong.

The time is approaching on wings swift and free
When you’ll miss all this worry and care,
When on back closet hook you will take a fond look
At the old cap and coat hanging there;
You will fondle the strap that once circled his books,
And the hot tears will hastily start;
Don’t nag him today—he will soon go away,
And the silence will ’most break your heart.

TO A GROUCH

Oh! little boy blue, you're a wonderful boy,
If only you'd learn how to play,
If you would be pleasant and kindly and true,
Forgetting yourself for a day,
And if when the game is against you, you'd smile,
And not take your toys and run home, the while—
Why, little boy blue, you could win over Fate,
If you'd learn how to smile—while you wait!

You snatch at the prize ere the race is begun,
You haven't the patience to see
That no man can have what he never has won,
Whatever his merits may be;
There isn't a thing that is worthy of him,
That a real man can't get, if he tries with a vim;
Lay your grievance aside—other boys aren't to blame—
Grow a smile—and get into the game!

GOOD-BYE

We meet and pass and speak one word unheeding,
Though any hour may rob us of our friend;
The voice that now in merry tones is speeding,
With the eternal echoes soon may blend;
We clasp today a hand that's warm and living,
And gaze in eyes that hold a merry gleam;
Tomorrow, the farewell look we may be giving,
And hear a blithe "good-bye" as in a dream.

We hope and plan and play, and part with laughter,
Unthinkingly, we use one word always;
And give no thought to what may follow after,
As though we were assured of endless days;
Too oft we part when hearts are sad and aching,
And speak in tones that cause a smothered sigh;
O, let us but remember we are taking
What, anytime, may be our last good-bye!

LOST: A FRIEND

I loved you well. You seemed so very near
I fancied, oftentimes, you read my mind,
So much alike we were, so close and dear,
Finding our ideals always of one kind;
Seeking the self-same channels in our thought,
Our ideas just a little odd, maybe,
Our mental paths by others left unsought,
Though dearly cherished both by you and me.

Years merged like links within a chain and we
Seemed destined still to tread life's paths together;
Neither had thought of what might sometime be
Sufficient cause our loyal faith to sever;
Then came a test that tortured mind and soul—
I watched and waited while the acid burned,
Nor had one doubt 'twould leave you true and
whole,
Though others laughed and all my trusting spurned.

Within one hour a life-time friendship died,
The ideals you had voiced all slipped away;
I found a stranger standing by my side,
And you meet one when I pass by each day;
There is no sadder notice on life's road,
Posted by travelers journeying towards its end,
Than that which bears—adding to each grim load—
The simple wording only: “Lost: A Friend.”

CLOUDS

Beneath the tree-boughs, interlaced and green,
I've lain in full abandonment to thought,
Watching the gray clouds drifting in between
The outstretched arms above; and deftly wrought
As on fine canvases, great pictures grew
There on the mammoth roof of curving skies,
And moved majestically across the blue,
A thrilling revelation and surprise.

One picture was so wonderful and fine
I shrink from marring it with faulty pen,
But since the art was so completely mine,
I long to share it: It was sunset then,
And in a bank of gray an altar stood,
A perfect thing with every line complete,
And kneeling there, as vestal virgins would,
Three angels bowed before the mercy-seat.

Far from the West the sun cast one last ray
Across the space, and sank to its repose;

And from that matchless altar done in gray
The three forms gently, reverently arose;
And then, their evenings prayers so sweetly said,
The altar, broken, drifted slowly o'er,
The sunset turned the virgins' robes to red—
I looked—and lo! the angels were no more.

YOU

You came from the shadowy Somewhere one morn,
To dwell near the gate of my heart;
I felt a delight that was suddenly born,
And strange, tender impulses start.

You gave a new tint to the blossoms that swayed
On the trellis, that morning in Spring;
The pansies in far deeper hues were arrayed,
The birds found a new song to sing.

You came—and the world was a garden of bloom,
Each day was a rose, sweet and red;
You went—and the world is a garden of gloom,
And the roses are withered and dead.

JUSTICE

A keen blade makes an open wound,
And crimson stains are bright,
And laws are made for blade and blood,
To keep man's conduct right;
But what of those who stab and slay
A human heart—and go away?

An open wound is red and raw,
And everyone may see,
And those who use a knife, the law
Will punish lawfully;
But those who only stab the heart
May strike in safety and depart.

A keen blade makes an open wound,
A cruel wound and red,
And every man will cry that law
Upon its course be sped;
But souls are murdered everywhere,
And men but smile and call it fair.

A keen blade strikes—and it is done,
And all the world may know,
But through the years a poison gnaws
With deadly pain and slow;
But laws and men heed but the blade,
Or ragged holes by bullets made.

POPULARITY

Whom all adore I cannot love—
Too often he is weak,
Pliant, adjusting to wish of those
Whose voices speak.

Give me the strong, who swiftly take
Their chosen way, alone;
Nor cringe nor fawn, but boldly make
The world their own.

Whom all adore I cannot love—
There is no real force there,
For he whose will is like a rod
Stoops not to share.

Give me the strong! The lonely tree
Upon the storm-swept mountain great,
Has twice the strength of those we plant
Inside our gate.

Give me the strong! The plastic clay
Is moulded by the hands
Of every one who pauses, passing by—
The marble stands.

GOOD-NIGHT

Good-night shall sometime mean good-bye forever,
The hour-glass is too far away to see;
The sands are running swiftly; and they sever
The dearest ties most unexpectedly.

Good-night! Who knows the import of the parting?
Perhaps at dawn the silence shall be all;
'Tis sad that memory brings pain and smarting
As we so oft a cold good-night recall.

Good-night may mean forever. We are going
As flows the rushing stream where it must flow,
And Destiny our fragile craft is rowing—
We answer when the signal comes to go.

Within the homing harbor, all unheeding,
We bid departing friend a blithe good-night,
Yet ere the sunrise he may be swift-speeding
Far out, while tear-mist blurs his sail from sight.

WOODS IN AUTUMN

The woods in Autumn are a wordless song
That floods my heart with throbbing melody;
Colors of flame and bronze the notes prolong,
And russet and red complete the harmony.

The woods in Autumn are as paintings hung
Against the sky, with colors bold and bright;
The creeks are silver ribbons, deftly flung
Across the foreground, spreading left and right.

The woods in Autumn are an artist's store
Of treasures, laid upon a thousand hills;
October opens wide the magic door
Into the great salon, that charms and thrills.

And woods in Autumn are a sermon, too,
Teaching that death must come to everything;
But that when death and earth-decay are through,
We shall be called—to greet another Spring.

THE DIFFERENCE

Another Spring shall come with buds and flowers,
And singing birds a-tilt on swinging bough;
Another Spring, with all its magic hours
That wake wild ecstasies within us now.

The dew upon the tender grass shall glisten,
Where now we linger in a strange delight;
But we, apart, shall sadly pause and listen
To love-birds cooing softly in the night.

Another Autumn, too, shall bring its treasures
Of color-flame to paint the wooded hill;
Another hour shall bring untasted pleasures,
And wines of life may sometimes warm and thrill,

Yet never shall a Spring be quite so glowing,
Nor Autumn lift such radiance to the sky,
Nor winds be so caressing in their blowing—
For we have loosened hands—and said good-bye.

FORGET IT

Why live it twice? If once you fail and fall,
Forget it when the sun has set that night;
Close that account, and strive but to recall
Whatever in it left a ray of light;
When habit seeks to lure you to look back
And live again in memory that day,
You'll prove your growing strength or show its lack
As you press on—or loiter by the way.

Why live it o'er? If it were sad, forget!
Your memory is a torture you may kill;
The task is not an easy one, and yet
There is a remedy in force of will;
If wrong were done, and you the act must curse,
The sooner you forget, the best for you;
Why dally with it? That but makes it worse;
Not once, but many times, you live it through.

Why linger by the bier of those dead things
That nevermore can come again your way?

If you regret, then conquer well the stings,
Nor let their poison spoil another day;
How clean and fresh the wondrous morning's dawn:
New hopes, new aims, and always one new chance
To try again, rebuilding what is gone,
With knowledge that shall present strength enchain.

IN THE NATURE OF THINGS

When the founts of endeavor seem empty and dry,
And the urge to press onward breaks down in a sigh,
When your ensign of hope like a bird furls its wings,
You are certain to fail—in the nature of things.

When you look on each day through the folds of a shroud,
You are likely to note all the gray in each cloud,
If you hear but a dirge when the feathered troupe sings—
Then you're certain to mourn—in the nature of things.

If you give up the race through a feeling of doubt,
You will never go far on the roads leading out;
But you'll pluck the ripe cluster wherever it swings,
If you hold to your faith—in the nature of things.

DREAMS

We weave of dreams the fabric of our lives,
For dreams we delve and do and labor long;
Not for the Thing, but for his dream, man strives,
Makes his brave fight, decides for right or wrong.

His struggles, hopes, ambitions—all he dares
Upon the field where battles daily rage,
All that he pleads for in his unsaid prayers,
All that he measures by his meager wage—

Are dreams. He may not look where you may look,
Nor hear the call that urges other men,
But his desires are like a singing brook
That keeps the verdure green within the glen.

For no man labors, if indeed he be a man,
Without some dream is urging on his plan;
For none would race unless there were a prize,
To speed him towards the goal, before his eyes.

Some glimpse far lands that send insistent call;
Some sense a woman's lips 'gainst theirs warm-pressed;
Some hold, as dearest trophy far of all,
A baby's golden head upon their breast.

Perhaps at first God dreamed; and, dreaming, wrought—
A theme divine, a vision without flaw;
A perfect, true conception—glorious thought—
That's thrilled man through the ages—filled with awe

All races, lifting them to higher plane
Than mortal, left unthrilled, had sought to gain;
And so shall we, the creatures that He fashioned,
Create and build and plan, through dream impassioned;

And at life's close, hold up for His inspection,
Our little dream—each with its imperfection;
Nor be abashed at what He then shall see,
For He has said not one shall perfect be.

THE PRICE

If you have passed among me, seeing naught,
Or if you've heard their voices drawing nigh
And looked upon their faces and have fought
With swift desire to crawl away and die;
If you have passed along the crowded street,
Have paused to shake a hand nor chatting spurned,
When all the while your brain could but repeat
Some agonizing thought that seared and burned;

If you've been sympathetic when your heart
Was aching 'til it almost smothered you,
Have manifested interest when the smart
Of self-hurt made you deathly sick all through;
If you have listened patiently the while
And let another tell his petty woe,
Have spoken words of cheering with a smile
When you were bearing griefs he could not know;
If you have stood alone when happy throngs
Beheld you, sensing naught of what you bore,
Then you have mastered self, and fairly earned
The strength that shall sustain you evermore.

MOTHERS OF MEN

Is there somewhere, a friend, a little gray-haired mother
Waiting days and weeks for just a word from you?
Will you honor claims of almost every other,
While she watches, uncomplainingly and true?
She'll excuse you for neglect—ah, more's the pity!—
She'll forgive the meanest act and make no moan;
But somewhere, sometime, some day, when she's gone the
 lonely way,
You will wish you'd sent a line to that old home.

You are still a boy to her, though years have vanished,
You have changed—but she's the same in mind and heart;
Tenderness from out your heart perhaps you've banished,
Since you've met the world and played your bitter part;
But when other loves have failed, there'll still be falling,
Like a mist of incense sweet from heaven's own blue,
Mother's sacred tears, while softly she'll be calling
Through the darkness, love's forgiveness to you.

THE TOUCH OF LOVE

When impulse moves, and mind, obeying, starts
Some new endeavor towards a worthy goal,
There is a noble longing that imparts
A sudden, swift elation to the soul;
From whence it comes there is no voice to tell,
Yet strongly moves the current, and we know
A force beyond our own is in the spell
That touches us with such a vital glow.

While this quick impetus impels, we move
With faces towards our destination, strong
To gain, to do, and all the while improve
The hours until the task be well along;
But when at length 'tis done, we need a hand
That comes to clasp our own, swift, unaware,
We need another soul to understand,
Some one simply to care for us—just care.

For, after all, the finest and the best
Of human effort needs a touch of love
To bring completion. Stronger than the rest

Of Nature's calls is this one from above;
The lure of fame may urge us, or command
Our highest mental forces everywhere,
But still we need some one to understand—
Some one to simply care for us—just care.

QUARRELS

You would not strike a loving face
Uplifted to your own,
Would think of that as deep disgrace,
Yet with a cruel tone
You'll lay across a loving heart
An ugly welt to pain and smart.

You would not strike a stranger's hand
That, pleading, sought your palm,
You'd try to feel, to understand,
And offer cheer and balm;
Yet gentler hands you'll thrust aside
And stalk away in stubborn pride.

Ah, no; you will not strike the face
Uplifted pleadingly;
A blow you could not quite erase
From off your memory;
But with a cutting word you'll score,
And leave a scar forevermore.

A blow might only slightly sting
And soon forgotten be
If it were an impulsive thing
And given angrily;
But bitter words outlive the years,
And find no healing in our tears.

I'VE WANTED YOU

I've wanted you 'til all the earth seemed crying
In pleading, sobbing tenderness for you;
'Til every quivering leaf seemed grieving, sighing,
And asking for you all the long night through.

I've longed for you 'til every taut nerve, aching,
Was like a harp string struck by blundering hand,
Its deepest notes of melancholy waking,
And no one near to care or understand.

I've called to you 'til tones turned into dumbness
That somehow froze within my heart and brain;
I've called to you 'til tones turned into numbness
That throbbed on silently, a ceaseless pain.

I've prayed for you with prayers too wild for voicing,
Then prayed for answer, in a mood sublime;
The Springtime calls—the whole world is rejoicing,
But silence rests between your soul and mine.

LONELINESS

No other hour is quite so lone and drear
In all the changing phases of this life,
As that in which, amid a crowd and cheer,
You are alone, despite the mirth that's rife;
With hundreds near, you still are far away,
In land of thought remote from boisterous throng,
And, though you seem to sing, yet are you still,
Unknowing single note or word of song!
For, though you mingle gaily in the zone
Where joy is king, yet are you quite alone.

Alone? How can that be? the thoughtless ask,
When thousands throng the street on festive days,
And you among the foremost shout aloud
When pageant with its trappings meets the gaze;
When fevered expectation bursts its bonds,
Can loneliness take up its vigil there,
Mocking the noisy, heedless human pawns
Who move upon life's chess-board, here and there?
Yea! crowds are but a picture soon gone by,
And souls from loneliness seek crowds—and die.

THE LITTLE OAK CHAIR

There's a little black mound on the hillside today
That was not there a short year ago,
And a little oak chair in the closet must stay,
When the others are placed in a row;
And a little checked apron, that she used to wear,
Is hanging, all crumpled, beside of the chair.

In a little blue room that is empty and cold
There is standing a little white bed,
And a gay little mirror, with flowers of gold,
Seems waiting to frame a dark head;
In a low wicker cradle beside of the wall,
Untouched lies a treasure—her battered rag doll.

There's a twisted red Tam on a nail by the door,
And a coat that has buttons but three,
Though their owner will need them, alas! nevermore,
They hold their old place tenderly;
And a bit of a scarf, with the needles awry,
Is there in her basket of knitting, laid by.

Oh! the berries will glow on the holly, blood-red,
And prayers will be mumbled and fast
As little bare feet scamper swiftly to bed,
The waiting of weary months past;
The stockings will hang by the grate in a row—
But the little black mound will be under the snow;
And the seats will be placed by the board, Christmas day,
But the little oak chair in the closet must stay.

BROKEN DREAMS

There's a little trunk in the attic,
And its key is red with rust,
There are cob-webs all around it,
And the top is gray with dust;
The spiders weave o'er the handles,
And swing from the strap of brown,
And no one's there who seems to care
When the lid was fastened down.

But oh, there was ne'er a treasure
More precious than that inside;
A wardrobe of tiny measure
For the little boy who died;
The dreams of a life are folded
In the raiment he did not use,
And the mother's tears flow through the years
For the baby she had to lose.

She fashioned each dainty garment
With love that was strong and deep;

In the gown she had sensed the rapture
Of seeing her darling sleep;
Had glimpsed him in every wee thing,
And held him against her breast,
The soft pink form so sweet and warm,
That lovingly she caressed.

But he was a fragile blossom
That needed the higher air,
One almost fancied a halo
Lay soft on his silky hair;
He could not wait for the dresses—
God called, and he had to heed,
And the trunk shall hold, like bits of gold,
The garments he did not need.

THE LONELY

There are so many lonely! Perhaps you do not know,
Or maybe you have never thought, as on your way you go;
Not all are gifted with the charm that wins your nod and
 smile,
Though you might find a noble mind—if you but paused
 a while.

Some grow by cultivation, but give no hint or glow,
Unless consideration some kindly friend shall show;
Then, like the leaves of some new book, fresh pages they
 unfold,
And in surprise you analyze and find them purest gold.

There are so many lonely! You surely know a few
Whose lives might broaden greatly through kindness shown
 by you;
It need not cost in dollars—not much in any line,
Mere cordial tone can hush a moan, like soothing anodyne.

MISUNDERSTANDING

You're far away tonight, my dearie, dearie,
The sunshine has been mocking me all day;
I've strained my eyes 'til they are weary, weary,
Longing to see you passing by this way;
Within my heart a pain is growing, growing,
The truth insists that I shall heed and know
That further still you're ever going, going—
And oh, I love you dearie, love you so!

The world is very cold, my dearie, dearie,
Outside the magic circle of your arms;
My heart is pleading to be cheery, cheery,
Safe locked against your breast from all alarms;
The tears persist tonight in falling, falling,
The breezes whimper of an unknown woe,
And 'cross the silence I am calling, calling—
Come back to me, I love you, love you so!

SCHOOL-DAYS

There's a land of level prairie
Where the bob-white's call is heard,
And the song birds hold high carnival each morn;
Where a zig-zag fence outlines the road,
Most rakish and absurd,
As it follows past the fields of waving corn;
There's a singer on the top-most rail
A thrilling out his lay
To his haughty, muffed-up lady sitting nigh;
Time on time I've paused to listen and to watch
 his loving way,
And afar I'd catch a rival's raucous cry.

Trudging onward down the beaten road
Made hard by driving rain,
I have listened to those songsters o'er and o'er,
'Til I'd reach the old brown school-house
And be robbed of their refrain
When the teacher closed the clumsy, creaking door.
Now, the years have brought me many a tune,

Sung in a thousand keys,
And I've tried to get the "cultured" view and sense,
But I vow I never yet have heard
Such music on the breeze
As the meadow-lark trilled from that old rail fence.

YOUR EYES

Your eyes are sometimes calm and peaceful pools
Where warm light lingers with a mellow glow,
So very calm they are, their glance but cools
The fever of my admiration, though
In meeting them I straightway start to plan
How I may startle them from that repose,
Waken return of action, if I can,
In those soft depths where sunny laughter grows.

Sometimes your eyes are troubled seas that tell
Of warring elements at strife, though none may know,
A potent force controlled is in their spell,
And storms are sensed that presage awful woe;
A chill is in the air—I draw apart,
No gleam lights up the sullen, somber sea,
Until the tides surge back into your heart
Fresh with the tang that breathes of mastery.

And sometimes—ah, yes, often!—are your eyes
The brightest stars that ever yet have shone,

Gleaming to light my earthly paradise,
Beaming with tender love for me alone;
Then suddenly I study them and see
A soft reflection mirrored clear and true:
Beyond your love that's shining out at me
Is mine that's shining into them—for you!

SILENCE

Somewhere is one whose praise I crave
More than the laurel crown,
A smile in the eyes so blue and grave,
Meeting my own of brown;
Clasp of a tender hand and strong,
Words in a mellow tone,
Vibrant note in my sweetest song,
Lilt that has waned, I own.

But silence across the space of years,
Though others in kindness come;
Silence across the waste of tears,
Silence! But just that one
Could waken the chords of a lost refrain
On the harp of my soul's desire;
But only an echo, dull with pain,
Drifts from that muted lyre.

AN INCONSISTENCY

If a heaven there be in the after-time,
When souls from this life are free,
A wonderful place where the joy-bells chime
From the temples eternally;
Where memories fade, and the errors made
No longer their shadows throw—
Then why, oh why, the direful cry
When the summons comes to go?

If a heaven there be for the good and true
And ever you strive to win
The mastery over the soul of you
On paths that are dark with sin,
If your faith be real and you truly feel
That a Father awaits you there—
Then why the cry when your loved ones die?
Do you, then, distrust His care?

And if there be heaven, why do you seek
To know of the ones long dead?

Why urge the question, or strive to speak
To spirits already fled?
With your mortal cry would you even try
Their heavenly bliss to mar?
Oh, leave them at rest! If your God knows best
He'll guard them where e'er they are.

I'VE PRAYED FOR YOU

Oh, I have prayed—yes, I have prayed for you!
Not long-drawn prayers as some might pray—
'Tis not my way;
Not words on words sent up to God
That He would please to do
My will towards you;
No words at all, because He knows
The current of each thought that flows,
And where it goes.

But I have prayed—oh, I have prayed for you!
In silent tensity of prayer
That you be given strength to bear,
That you be given sight to see,
That you be prospered bounteously;
That health might bless your daily round,
That peace within your heart abound;
No gift within His ample store
Have I withheld. Aye, even more:

I've prayed that e'en my love for you
Might fall as falls the crystal dew
Unnoticed on the flowers, to bless
And strengthen you in all distress,
When parching winds of life blow strong
And every hope seems born a-wrong;
That He might take this steady glow
And form a torch where e'er you go,
That, shining bright and pure and clear
Shall light your pathway far and near.

No long-drawn prayers for God to heed—
There is no need;
My very heart-throbs He can hear,
Knows all my longing, hope and fear;
Reads every impulse of my soul
That, swept in prayer, would upward roll.
Not long-drawn prayers, as some would pray—
'Tis not my way;
But with the love that's in my heart,
Too strong for utterance to impart,
I've urged my supplications through,
For you—for you.

FAREWELL

The Spring shall come again and yet again,
With all its witchery of bud and bloom,
Its madrigals of song, its mist of rain,
Its dank sweet odors in the woodland gloom;
Its wondrous tender love-notes in the dawn,
When feathered wings first cleave the waiting air,
But I shall wake to know that you are gone—
And hear but sounds of mourning everywhere.

The flowers shall yield their fragrance and their grace,
And luscious be the clusters on the vine,
But I shall feel your blown hair on my face,
Your tears upon my hands, like sacred wine;
When Autumn once again its magic weaves
In colors rivaling the Orient's art,
I'll hear a wordless threnody of leaves,
And sounds of sobbing deep within my heart.

THE MOUNTAINS

God loved the mountains best, be very sure;
He kept the tallest, straightest trees to trim
The rugged brown façades, and to secure
Immunity from trespassers within
The cool, deep-shadowed places, interlaced
Vine maples in a network strong and fine;
Then side by side artistically He placed
The multitudinous shrub and clinging vine.

He built the mountains rough and very high,
And laid hewn rocks along the canyon walls;
Upon a green moss carpet soft and dry,
The oreads dance to music of the falls;
The sun's too-eager rays He screened away
With canopies of deeply tinted leaves;
And Zephyrus and Notus gently sway
The tessellated awning in the breeze.

God loved the mountains best. He made no road
In all that vast domain for man to tread;

Here wild free creatures find a safe abode,
And luscious fruit is hanging ripe and red;
The ax-man's blows have cleft and cleared a way,
And noisome, shrieking things go hurrying through;
But God forgives, and in the twilight gray
This alien path He dampens down with dew.

But oh, that they might be as He had planned—
Untrodden save by those who seek repose!
His thaumaturgy few can understand;
The thallium on the banks where swiftly flows
The nectar of the gods in murmuring streams—
Ah, who in passing notes that it is there?
Yet God is patient, and His sunshine gleams
Across each new-made trail that men prepare.

CONFIDENCE

You cannot bring it back, that mystic thing
You tore to bits, as children rend a flower
Through lack of thought. Ah, no! the bitterest sting
Is that you had it once within your power
And crushed it! But that day is past and gone,
The bud despoiled by ruthless hand is left
With all its beauty wasted, pale and wan,
And even of its fragrance quite bereft.

And so this spirit-thing shall not unfold
In promised sweetness, nor its perfume live;
Despoiled and bruised, it now lies dead and cold
For lack of nurturing you failed to give.

You cannot bring it back! Each petal rare
Was fashioned and deep-tinted in my heart
Through years of conscious homage, rendered fair
And paid without a question, as your part;
But one by one you plucked and threw aside

The tender blossoms that I freely gave;
Faith sadly grieves where that exotic died,
And Memory keeps lone vigil o'er its grave.

DEATH

For long death never came quite close to me,
Though others found him lurking on the way
In early youth, with eyes fixed greedily
Upon a loved one whom he took, one day,
To that dim, silent place where mortals cry
In vain from earth for just one clear response,
But blindly he forever passed me by,
Nor even cast one shadow; but who vaunts
Such sweet consideration, soon must learn
That not for long does Death so kindly wait,

Nay, he but loiters oft to deeper burn
His sorrow on our hearts to compensate
For that brief respite, given to deceive
Into a fancied hope that we may hold
Our dear ones here; then, finding we believe
In this fond dream, he enters fierce and bold,
Nor spares that one for whom we longest plead,
Nor takes, as lesser toll from us, another;
Ah! trust him not, else then your heart shall bleed,
For when he came to me he took—my mother.

WE WERE NOT SATISFIED

Can you forget the myriad things
That made the cycle of those years:
The witchery of tender Springs,
The Autumn leaves, the tears,
The gray mists blurring out the view,
The somber scenes across the way,
The unsaid things we sensed and knew
Each passing day?

Can you forget the mystic thread
We wove on Fancy's magic loom
Into those days that now are dead—
Dead as that first Spring's bloom?
We watched the gray doves come and go,
Stood at the window while the rain
Tapped with a ghost-touch soft and low
Against the pane.

The hours were commonplace, we said,
And wished for scenes some otherwhere,

We saw the sunsets, gold and red,
Watched snow-clouds fill the air;
Heard song birds in the trees above,
Had all God's gifts, and yet
We were not satisfied with love—
And now—regret!

A STRANGER THEN AM I

Lord, I am waiting! Every day I scan
Thy universe for signs to point the way;
I strive but to believe, yet never can,
The contradictory things that mortals say
And charge to Thee, relying on the Book
To prove each idea right; and yet none brook
The inference that another may, perchance,
Be nearer truth than they; and since advance
Is never made in realm of thought or deed
By mere perplexity, each complex creed
I sadly lay aside, and trust to Thee
To understand just why I seem to be
An outcast from Thy fold. Lord, when I think
Of all Thy work so wonderful, I shrink
From offering e'en one tiny thought of mine—
One single doubt of power so all-divine.

I watch the crowded buds as they unfold
Their tinted petals slowly, never bold
To hurry into bloom, save as Thy will

Decrees the time is fit. The earth stands still
And shivers 'neath its frosty shroud and waits
'Til Spring is sent to open up the gates
And bid adieu to that most frigid guest—
Grim Winter. And again, at Thy behest
The trees put on their leaves and murmuring wave
A greeting to the passing clouds; while grave-
Eyed violets, shivering in the cold
Press up most bravely through the earthen mold;
The birds resume their tasks, nor questioning pause
To once deliberate upon the cause,
Nor speculate why seasons come and go—
They but obey a voice they love and know.

Unnumbered miracles by Thee each Spring
Proclaim Thy power in wondrous heralding;
I would not doubt Thy universal grace,
Thy wonder-working force; but oh, Thy face
I see not as a countenance like to ours—
But as the face of Nature! Birds and flowers
And bees and butterflies and sunny skies—
The face of Nature minus all disguise
Of creed and cult and tribe, of dogmas and of form,
And, seeing Thee as such, I e'er must scorn
To circumscribe Thy scope by e'en one thought
Of doubt—because of wonders Thou hast wrought.

Nor will I fret my soul, nor hold aloof
My faith in Thee, beholding all Thy proof;
And yet, if man-made creeds be proven true,
I am a stranger, quite unknown to You,
One lost indeed, because I must refuse
The strange, conflicting creeds that others choose.

I NEVER KNEW

I never knew that tears could burn
Like acid, 'til they left a scar,
Nor that a heart might truly learn
To hide the deep and painful mar;
Nor that the sunshine sometimes turned
Into a fever fierce and hot,
But these at last I've learned, I've learned—
Since you forgot.

That life could seem a desert plain
Where cactus grew by crumbling wall,
The winds a breath hard-drawn in pain,
Were truths I never guessed at all;
But I've been taught by torture slow
That joy and pain and love are one,
And that the world must never know
What love has done.

SILENT PLACES

God, keep some silent places for us still,
Apart from those where man forever goes;
Some altars lit by sunset on the hill,
Or alcoves in the canyon wall, where glows
The crystal drop of moisture on the fern,
While ancient firs bend tenderly above,
For souls of men must sometimes deeply yearn
For silence such as this, to sense Thy love.

God, save them for us still, lest we forget—
These altars built eternities ago;
Mankind is prone to ruin, without regret,
Thy handiwork—oh, let it not be so!
The fret of all his petty self is seen
In masonry of towers and walls and piers,
But peace is in Thy murmuring forests green,
Thy peace, that shall abide throughout the years.

The clash and clang and roar of what he makes
Strikes to the nerves 'til man himself rebels;

But all Thy woodland minstrelsy awakes
Our better thoughts, and worship true compels;
Oh! may the towers of tall pines on the crest
Be temple signals, pointing out the way,
And in Thy silent places let us rest
A little while, sometimes, yea, rest and pray.

RENUNCIATION

Oh, lonely is the even-tide
When Thought alone is by my side,
And Thought is sad and weary;
I'd travel far to seek a store
Of gems upon a mystic shore—
But the night is dark and dreary.

There is a sobbing in the pines—
My soul repeats the dismal whines
In whimpers low;
There is a note of hidden pain
Where joy is wont to ring and reign—
The bleak winds blow.

There is a love-song in my heart,
But I must bid it to depart—
I dare not sing!
Oh, lonely is the even-tide
When Reason, a relentless guide,
Bids Hope take wing!

HE PAINTS IN GRAY

God paints ofttimes in gray. 'Twould seem to be
A color scheme supremely liked by Him;
Its softened tones at close of day we see,
When twilight enters slowly, pale and dim;
The hills wear countless changes of this shade,
The clouds show varying tones against the sky;
The pigeon's wing of loveliest hues is made,
The willows in their gray garb bend and sigh.

The living creatures, too, this thought display
In priceless furry coats beyond compare;
Ah, yes! God truly loves to paint in gray—
We even find His lines upon our hair;
And often at the close of sorrowing day
We look deep in our hearts—and find it there.

DESIGN

Two men strolled in a wood one morn in May,
The light of sunrise filtered through the trees
In glints of gold, fair promise of the day;
The air was music-laden: birds and bees
And things that crawl and creatures of the wood
Awoke and stirred; the pulse of life was strong—
And one man viewed the scene and called it good,
And caught the harmony of sound and song;
Another questioned why a plan so fair
Should tolerate man's misery everywhere.

They paused to pluck a bud, and tier on tier
The folded petals fitted in the cone;
They halted by the brook where, swift and clear,
The riffles sang in unison of tone;
They felt the spongy sod beneath their feet,
And noted that the grass was patterned, too;
They watched a winged flight, accurate and fleet,
Heard call and answer all the forest through;

And one man walked serene and unafraid—
The other railed at errors men have made.

And he who carped was of a faith accepted,
While he who merely trusted had no creed;
The one had pondered long—and then rejected;
The other grasped a cult to meet his need;
They left the woodland, each with thoughts swift-teeming,
As Dawn, a-blush, swooned in the arms of Day,
The creedless one, his eyes with trust bright beaming:
“I am Design,” he said, and turned away.
(Ah, splendid faith that sees one perfect plan!
No better creed is given any man.)

THE DROUTH

The hollyhocks are clinging to the trellis, most forlorn,
The fennel droops, dejected, by the road;
The ivy has a pallid tint as in the summer morn
It clambers weakly over its abode;
The pasture's seared to leather-brown, the trees are tense
and still,
The bushes and the shrubs wear ash-gray shrouds;
A burning sheen comes filtering down from scorched and
blistering hill,
To silent, smothering valley, in hot clouds.

The flies buzz on the screen door, going in and coming out,
The bees hum in a listless monotone;
The shepherd dog lies on the porch, his red tongue lolling
out,
And the cat, sprawled on the mat, is left alone;
A sort of coma seems to hold the parching earth in thrall,
The atmosphere itself is out of breath;
All voices are depressed and low that otherwise would call,
And joyfulness is fairly choked to death.

And then the heavens don the veil of mist they long did
scorn,
The belching thunder crashes loud and high;
The lurid lightning darts and gleams and urges on the
storm,
As it flashes startling signals to the sky;
The rain descends in silver sheets that glisten in the space,
The trees send wig-wag messages broadcast;
And in the glorious after-hour, when God has bathed her
face,
We see sweet Nature smile, her illness past.

NIGHT

The mountains, folded over 'gainst the blue,
Lean to each other as the shadows fall;
The yellow sunshine threads a ribbon through
The eyelets made of boughs; the cypress tall
Its lacy gown adjusts with quivering sigh,
The cricket trills a melancholy note,
And one by one the sounds of day-time die,
As song-tones mute to silence in the throat.

Night slips along the curving canyon bed,
With mystic draperies of black and gray;
A toga made of moonbeams on her head,
A single star to light her darksome way;
She flings a veil of silver o'er the stream,
And bids the threnody of leaves to hush,
Paints on each hill the outline of a dream,
While Romance holds the palette and the brush.

THE PHANTOM

A thousand times I've said good-bye to you,
And turned away from every common thought
That formed the vital tie that once we knew,
With all the wondrous, joyous hours it brought.

A thousand times I've said a last farewell
To memories of laughter, moods and tone,
Have bade them lift their tantalizing spell
And leave my soul in stillness—though alone.

I close the door against the whispering night,
And bid my heart give o'er its drear refrain,
But lo! you stand between me and the light
And all those sad good-byes have been in vain.

IN NATURE'S THEATER

The first scene is a gray and sullen sky,
With weeping willows bending in a gale,
Their ash-gray foliage sending forth a sigh
That has a whimper like a human wail;
A little creek is muttering along
Between its muddy banks; a meadow-lark
Darts o'er the trees without one note of song;
The lightning zig-zags once, a brilliant spark;
The clouds combine and form a bank of gray
Against the West; the thunder crashes near,
The rain comes splashing down, a chilling spray,
And all the earth is sodden, cold and drear.

Scene-shifters now a different landscape show:
The sunset god displays his rarest scroll,
The gulls dip in the brine before they go
Across the beach where peaceful combers roll;
The pungent winds come in across the bar,
And whip the red into each passing cheek;
The light-house sheds its beckoning light afar,

A silent voice that needs no word to speak;
Upon the drying sand where lovers pace,
A mellow radiance falls with myriad gleams,
Lighting to sweeter beauty every face,
Adding a purer luster to their dreams.

Then once again the stage is dark. Night falls,
And for a time the audience may repose,
'Til Dawn appears to answer curtain-calls,
In draperies of dainty pearl and rose.

HE BROOKS NO LOSS

If this be all, what wanton waste
Of wares and worth and wage
Has been the price of this poor show
Upon life's changing stage!
If this, the play, be for a day,
And then the curtain fall,
What grotesque jokes the jester, Hoax,
Has played upon us all!

The scene is laid, and Birth and Death
March hand in hand always;
A fee is asked of Man and Maid,
While Pay, the piper, plays;
The aged go; the lights burn low,
There is no curtain call;
And in the aisle without a smile,
They pass the usher, Pall.

If this be all, what farce the plot,
The price, the pain, the play!

Why such a plan for mortal man
For just a single day?
Oh, list ye well: God brooks no loss
In His eternal scheme:
He'll lose no note of what He wrote
In life's majestic theme.

AN ODE TO NATURE

Call to me at day dawn, in glimmers gold and blue,
In jagged shafts of crimson the gray mist breaking through;
In pearly drops of incense clinging to the rose,
In amethyst illusions the rugged mountain shows;
In the glittering snow-foam bubbling from the falls—
Anywhere and everywhere, I will heed your calls!

Call to me in Springtime, in violets sweet and shy,
In rosebuds deeply blushing beneath the ardent sky;
In creamy waxen hyacinths, exuding subtle lure,
In bold carnations red as blood; in the white ones pure;
In modest yellow daisies, claiming much of praise,
In nodding piquant pansies, with their saucy gaze;
In shyly creeping clematis, clambering o'er the walls—
Nature, I am listening to all your beauty-calls!

Call to me in murmurs when the earth begins to wake,
In winds that tease the ripples upon the silver lake;
In bird songs that are wafted in music sweet and low,
In chuckling of the brooklet that seeks the river's flow,

In roaring of the swift stream that through the canyon
brawls—

Nature, I am hearkening to all your minstrel-calls!

THE TALISMAN

'Twas a little vine-wreathed cottage
Just within the edge of town,
Roses clung to eaves and trellis,
And their petals drifted down,
While a tragic scene was acted
Just inside the cosy room,
Where a man and woman labored,
Lost to morning cheer and bloom;
Gathered here and there the objects,
Dear mementoes—now forlorn—
Of the day they entered gaily
On their happy wedding morn.

From the wall he took a picture,
From a shelf she lifted books,
Silently they stripped the cottage,
Leaving bare its pleasant nooks;
Eyes and voices cold and lifeless,
Each avoided other's way,
Soon they cleared the little parlor

Of the things they'd meant to stay;
When, from out a crowded trunk-till
Tumbled something small and white,
And a flood of burning tear-drops
Hid the object from their sight.

Just a baby's shoe, quite shapeless,
With a hole in one wee toe,
But it told a heart-break story
Of their dreams of long ago;
Each one stooped to grasp the token
That was lying on the floor,
And at last two hearts were broken
From their icy chill once more;
Sobbingly two voices mingled
In a name that came to mind,
While hands clasped o'er a baby's shoe
That Fate had chanced to find!

SUNSET

The sun shed its last lingering rays across the vaped
space,

And sank from view; a bank of flame-fluff rose in billows
high;

The gulls furled wing and ceased their graceful race;
Torch-bearers flung deep hues on yonder shadowing
sky:

The shore, with all its brine-wet, sparkling gems
Of bright carnelian, agate, jasper, shells,
Dried quickly all the moisture on its hems,
Thrown there so heedlessly by passing swells.

Trails on the sands that myriad restless feet
Had trodden there so happily that day,
Were smoothed by silent waves that swiftly beat
Upon their destined, even-tempered way;
The far-out rocks that scatter and dismiss
The fury of the breakers that attack,
Remained impassive to the savage hiss
Of whirling spray, impotently hurled back.

The haze, that none may quite describe, came in
From distant zone beyond this mortal reach;
The waves, in shimmering raiment pale and thin,
Flung out their brine-blue draperies on the beach;
A deeper gray; the gulls no longer dipped
To search the surf. The West had ceased to be;
Night drew her curtains down; the ocean's line
Co-mingled with the earth-line, mistily.

THE UNSOUGHT

She sits alone beside a dying fire,
And sees her hopes to fleecy ashes go;
Bids sad farewell to feminine desire
For love and praise that other women know;
The baby head she visions on her breast
Is but a sickening phantom, like the rest;
The little home she one-time planned, is fled,
And mourned in silence, like the sacred dead.

She sees her idol as in years long past
She saw him, towering high among his kind;
In agony she sees him choose at last
A painted doll, with neither heart nor mind;
Beholds his home, where children are unknown,
And knows his hopes, like hers, have sadly flown.

In secret she has dared to call his name,
To clasp him to her breast with ardent word,
Has e'en expressed, without a blush of shame,
The burning love no other ears have heard;
Has kissed the lips that only smiled, one day,
And left her to her dreams—and ashes gray.

ART

Sly elves steal in and paint the flowers
With gorgeous hues in still night hours,
Their brushes wondrous fine;
The dew a crystal drop imparts
To linger prisoned in the hearts
Like magic wine.

The tints of mystic mountain haze,
The pastel tones of twilight rays
All re-appear—
The Autumn's bronze and yellow-gold
Within some flower's heart unfold,
When Spring is here.

We pause and quaff the incense rare
That blossoms toss upon the air,
Drink deep the gift,
Ere earth again receives her own,
As petals fall and lose their tone,
And in the soft winds drift.

But oh, the wonder of such art!
The mystery within the heart
Of each sweet flower!
The elfin artists paint with care—
We see their skilled touch everywhere
In blossoming woodland bower.

THE MAN-LAND

Would you hurry away to the Man-land,
Little boy with your eyes of blue,
Would you trade all your precious treasures,
Real wealth that is fine and true?
They have strange toys in the Man-land,
But of marbles they have not one,
Though they have queer games they are playing
From morn 'til the day is done;
They sail great kites in the Man-land,
So large that you'd be afraid,
And their trains go past so fast—so fast
That you can't see how they're made.

There's not much fun in the Man-land,
Little boy with your eyes of gray,
Though you think it is very pleasant
As you glimpse it from far away;
And there's scarcely a one in the Man-land,
With all of its seeming joy,
Who wouldn't turn backward gladly,

And be just a care-free boy;
But they do strange things in the Man-land,
That sensible lads would spurn:
They hide all their tears, their sorrows and fears,
And this you would have to learn.

They forget their prayers in the Man-land,
Little boy with your eyes of brown;
They even forget their manners,
And answer with sneer or frown;
They tell many tales in the Man-land,
And often they're quite untrue,
But they aren't like the fairy stories
That are told to interest you;
They grow very cold in the Man-land,
And their laughter gets out of tune;
Oh, stay with your toys, for all little boys
Go to Man-land too soon—too soon!

DREAD

Strip life of dread and half its terrors flee;
We then confront what IS, not what Might Be;
E'en pain itself is not so hard to bear,
Reduced to actual feeling, minus scare;
For naught that overtakes us ever means
As much in real occurrence as in dreams,
And a full half our energies we waste
In dreading griefs we never have to taste.

Strip life of dread, and what a change there'd be!
Hope then would reign, and doubt forever flee;
For doubt is dread, and timid ones are torn
By pain of things that never shall be born;
And minds that fear to try, are paralyzed—
Their richest treasures left unrealized;
While he who has fair courage, less the dread,
Thinks not of doubt—and takes his place—ahead.

IF I MIGHT ASK

If I might ask of God one priceless gift
To bless my life and make it strong and fine,
To help me from the chaos ever sift
Those things which are immortal and divine;
If it were granted that one blessing fall
Upon my earthly path, my joy increasing,
I'd ask a broader charity towards all,
And in mankind a tender faith unceasing.

If I might plead a second time, and gain
The favor that I craved all else above,
I'd ask the power to soothe another's pain,
And warm some hopeless heart with human love;
Then, when these gifts had both been granted me,
And God the last and choicest one was sending,
I'd ask once more—still broader charity,
And in my fellow-men a faith unending.

PERFECT DAYS ALWAYS

There isn't a day in the whole round year
That isn't a perfect day;
Measured and trued and painted with gold,
It glides on its destined way;
It is one of the gems that is given you—
A pearl in life's necklace rare,
And it hasn't a scar and it hasn't a mar—
Unless you have made it there.

The sun cannot shine every day of your life,
But the soft clouds have their place;
If all of the hours were a glitter and shine,
You would weary in each day's race;
For the eyes must behold and the soul must feel
The peace of these quiet grays,
That soften the light and refresh our sight,
After the burning rays.

There is beauty abundant for every need
In every day of the year;
If you cannot see it, you're blind indeed,

For beauty is ever near;
Whatever your lot, you may freely share
In the paintings of earth and sky;
They are wondrous in worth and there's never a dearth
Of charm—for the seeing eye.

A FRIEND OF MINE

Ill health has laid a blighting hand
Upon her splendid powers,
Has closed the door on liberty and space;
While all alone she fills the time
That makes the golden hours,
There is no frown nor cloud upon her face;
With gentleness both true and fine
She welcomes every one,
Her greeting is as sweet as a caress,
And her cheer is like a ray of warmth
Shed by the noon-day sun,
'Til of dreariness you would not even guess.

She has set herself a duty—
Or a little helpful task
That she means shall be accomplished every day,
“One kind thing, to bring a pleasure,”
Is her answer when you ask
How she sows such seeds of joy along the way.
Shut in from the rush and hurry,

You may say she has more time—
Ah! but think of all the pain that she must bear!
And how few there are, with leisure,
Who have impulse so sublime—
And how few with hearts so willing just to share.

Every day some deed of kindness
For another—Can you guess
What a change would come, if we were all as good?
If each one would care for others more—
For self a little less—
And give out a bit of sunshine when we could?
Why, a million minds with helpful thoughts,
Each with a strong desire
To aid another climbing life's rough hill,
Would start a blaze of human warmth
To cheer with healing fire
Nine-tenths of those whose hearts are cold and ill.

MY UNKNOWN FRIENDS

I know that somewhere you exist,
And that you understand,
Though I may never see your face,
Nor grasp you by the hand;
Though you may never speak one word
In voicing thoughts we share,
Yet I shall know, where'er I go,
Your understanding rare.

I know, somehow, that you are touched
Through sense of ear and eye,
By plaintive, thrilling melody,
By gorgeous sunset sky;
That oft your heart is filled with pain
That still is ecstasy,
That, as by wine that's aged and fine,
You're thrilled by sky and sea.

I know, somehow, that in a crowd
You oft are lone and drear,

-❧❧❧❧-

That few there be who know and see
Life, as you find it, here;
Not oft you meet with those whose souls
Are en rapport quite true,
And oh, the sting when others sing
So out of tune with you!

LITTLE GIRL

Eighteen! You are a woman now,
Life's outward paths are calling you;
June weaves a rose-wreath for your brow,
All set with diamond-drops of dew;
The birds are trilling of the Spring,
You pause a moment in delight,
Before you spread the fledgling wing
And from the home nest take your flight.

The greatest gift of life—you came
And twined your fingers 'round my heart,
You kindled that most sacred flame
The warmth of which shall not depart;
And when the way is lone and drear
And shadows settle dark and low,
A whispered prayer shall calm your fear,
Breathed through the dusk of long ago.

Perhaps another winsome maid
Shall smile into your eyes some day,

And you will speak of years that fade,
And how life gives—and takes away;
Perhaps her eyes shall sometimes hold
A look like mine, then you at last
Will compass all my love untold,
That speaks to you from out the past.

A LITTLE WAY WITH ME

Come walk a little way with me,
The sunlight lingers on the hill;
The winds are murmuring cheerily,
The pool is dark and still,

My hand in yours—oh, let us stroll,
With hearts at rest, a little while;
The daises bloom on yonder knoll,
The skies are fair—and smile.

Come, walk a little way with me:
The path has drear and somber grown;
The winds are whispering plaintively,
I fear to go alone.

Oh, walk a little way with me—
The lonely night draws on apace;
But still the sunshine I shall see
Forever—in your face.

TO THE SONG BIRDS

Sing in sheer joy of the rapture that's swelling
Within your wee heart as you unfurl the wing;
In wild exultation voice bliss that is welling,
In gay, thrilling notes let it passionately ring.

Perch by the nest that your babies may hearken,
Fill their young minds with the tales you can tell;
Shriek of swift flight when the storm-clouds oft darken,
Lilt of your race with the blue ocean's swell.

Warble of sails you have made o'er the broad fields,
Visioning corn waving green blades to you;
Joy, full and free, is the treasure your life yields,
Give of your music—with notes full and true.

At twilight sail down, fold your wings in the gloaming,
Come, rest from your travels, the day has been long;
Alight on the bough that fore'er waits your homing,
And in the cool shadows trill lullaby song.

TWO TRUTHS I OWN

It saddens me to realize
That, long years hence, when I am gone,
The stars I view with eager eyes
Shall still shine peacefully at dawn;
The trees that murmur as I pass
Shall but grow taller; and, alas!
The secret never be betrayed
That I once rested in their shade.

It hurts me when I pause to think
That, when a bit of crumbling clay,
I rest in low, forgotten grave,
There shall pass, as in my day,
Fond sweethearts tender, loving, true,
Whispering of love—that once I knew;
Unheeding me, who lie so still,
Though once I felt the self-same thrill.

Ah! long years hence, when I am gone,
The paths we tread today together,

Shall still be winding on their way
Through stormy and through pleasant weather;
A pain is beating in my heart
As down that narrow path we go—
Two truths I own: That we must part,
And oh, I love you—love you so!

UNSELFISHNESS

I set myself a task: Never to ask
For what I did not just as freely give;
No kindness, sweet consideration; aught
In attitude, in gentleness, in thought—
Nothing, save what in full return from me
Another might expect as bounteously.

Then day by day my life began to prove
How selfish and how narrow was my groove,
For one by one the blessings I had known
Took wings, and to another realm had flown;
How little I had given through the days!
How much demanded in a thousand ways!

So humbled by my own acknowledgment,
I set myself a task and to it bent;
I ceased to talk of faults by others shown,
Aware at last of greater ones—my own;
Asked not of sympathy and love a part
Unless I found the same within my heart.

And lo! there is a bluer sky o'er head,
The birds sing sweeter than they did before;
And each day kindly thoughts to me are sped,
And loving hands come knocking at my door.

IN PARTING

Let your last words be kind, whate'er the first;
To leave a bitter memory you'll find brings worst
Of grief. You shall not miss the sting
That you inflict on any human thing;
For memory will not die, though it may keep
Its silence through the years; but when shall creep
From out the silent tombs within the brain
Some keen, sarcastic fling that caused a pain
To stab a heart, though half a life-time's past,
To you shall come the suffering at last.

Let your last words be kind. Ere you depart
Leave look or act or word to cheer some heart;
Another dawn may never spread its blue
O'er them, perchance; and though a whole life through
You grieve in vain regret, you cannot blot
A stain from memory, nor heal the spot
Where, like a never-dying coal the burn endures,
Caused by remorse that even time ne'er cures.
Let never darkness spread its pall at night
'Til towards all men you've tuned your heart-strings right.

JUST HUMAN FIRST

When effort, carried forward with a zest,
Has flattened into nothingness at last,
And life seems mocking, laughing at the best
That you have done in all the labor past;
When 'mid the tumbling ruins of your dream
You stand in dumb depression and defeat,
How many, then, shall seek you with that gleam
Of earnest sympathy you need to meet?

I would not urge upon you doubt of friend,
Nor yet distrust, nor whisper of their ways
When trouble falls; nor say it is the trend
Of human kind throughout our hurrying days;
But loyalty is something that we need
To cultivate and give to those we know,
For hours must come to all when hearts shall bleed,
And feet shall falter on the paths they go.

And in that hour there is no sweeter balm,
Or recompense for what life takes—or mars,

Than loyalty from some one true and calm,
Who soothes with tender sympathy our scars;
For, though a man be crowned a prince or king,
Whatever his experience, best and worst,
He is at all times this one certain thing:
Above and over all—just human first.

DOWN ON THE FARM

The sunset flames across the western rim
In hues that baffle all the art of man;
A line of firs, tall silhouettes and slim,
Stand guard above the valleys that they scan;
The crow, with one lasting lingering caw, flies low,
The trees in unison sway restlessly,
And in the hush of twilight seems to grow
A sense of loss that holds one breathlessly.

The old folks go about the evening work
Upon the farm, their routine as of old,
No minor detail overlook, or shirk,
No voiced complaint to listening ear e'er told;
They plod the paths ambition first surveyed
When little children romped beside the door;
Alone, they face the twilight, bent and grayed,
Their plans fulfilled—and asking nothing more.

But oh! there is a heart-ache in the scene,
The empty house where youthful voices were,

The verdant acres where the grain is green
Speak of stalwart sons; while night winds stir
The memory of a grave upon the hill;
The whispering of the evening is a prayer,
There is a tensivity of silence; still
The voices of the past are in the air.

And in the distant city's rush and roar,
Caught by its tides and tangled in its net,
Are those who played beside that farm-house door,
And oh, the tragedy—when they forget!

MOTHER

It seems we scarcely knew her
In her many years on earth,
Nor realized, 'til she had gone,
Her wondrous woman's worth;
Too much she gave, too freely toiled
For others, all the while,
Too much we blindly let her give—
Forgetting thanks or smile.

Now, looking back across the years,
Our hearts are wrung with pain,
Remembering the price she paid
That we—her own—might gain;
She placed no price upon her deeds,
Love prompted every one;
We simply knew she filled our needs—
Until her work was done.

Those toil-worn hands had never meant
So much to us, until

Upon her quiet breast they lay,
So white and cold and still;
What service they had done for us
We never paused to say,
Until we missed their ministry—
When she had gone away.

The thin gray hair upon her brow
Was like a halo-light,
But we had never known it—
'Til she went away that night;
We longed to tell our love at last,
And how we held her dear,
But oh, the hour had glided past—
Our words she could not hear!

Heart-breaking tears! At last we saw
With vision clear and bright,
The beauties of that noble soul
Who went away that night;
With aching hearts we knew, too late,
There never was another
So fine and true the whole way through
As she whom we called—Mother.

WHY SHOULD MAN DIE?

Why think that man shall die and live no more?
There is no loss in God's gigantic plan.
Changes shall be; aye, everywhere the core,
The kernel, is the part that lives. In man
The mental, vital force, the center, as it were,
Is really all that matters; while the shell,
The husk, may wither, foul decay occur,
Yet while the brain endures, men still impel,
Are counted something. But when the mental spark
Is snuffed, and only breathing flesh remains,
They are the same as dead, 'til from the dark
There flashes back the light that rules and reigns.

God's will is law: He made no thing to die;
He brooks no loss; however much we try
We cannot find where aught is ever lost:
'Tis simply changed by being sometime tossed
Into the crucible where dross slow-burns,
And gold is salvaged. Nature ever spurns

A waste in her vast kingdom; yet some say
That death annihilates this mortal clay!

Man boasts his supreme place in God's great plot—
He was the apex of that first stupendous thought;
He towers above all living things in brain,
In reason, force, endowment; yet the grain
Dies not upon the earth; the lovely flowers
Live, bloom and fade; but through the freezing
hours

Of winter we are never prone to cry
That ere the Spring the flowers must surely die!
'Tis known that in the chemistry of soil
Is wrought the resurrection, through God's toil;
And that, though leaves may fall, the days of Spring
Shall see a living plant its green arms fling
Into the sunlit air, its buds assume,
And in due time yield up its fragrant bloom.

Be very sure that man shall never die!
Since God has made him master of the field,
Endowed with brighter flame, made earth and sky
Bow to his will and of their forces yield,
Why reason that God would so wasteful grow
As then to cast aside, leave to decay,
The greatest force created here below?
Ah, no! Man, too, shall have his harvest day!

When God made him of all earth-things supreme,
He must have held man first in every scheme;
We need not doubt nor grieve when death shall call—
Man cannot die; he changes, that is all.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 898 932 3